



HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

December 2023

END OF YEAR REMINDERS

REMINDER: DECEMBER MONTHLY TIMESHEET

A reminder to ensure that all monthly timesheets in SOARHR are approved before leaving for the holiday. The timesheets will roll to a new year in January, and you will no longer have easy access to December at that time.

HOW MANY HOURS CAN STUDENTS WORK DURING THE HOLIDAYS?

Students must remain at 20 hours a week throughout the semester break. Students are not allowed to work more than 20 hours a week.

DO GAS HAVE TO MAKE UP TIME MISSED FROM WORK DURING HOLIDAYS DUE TO UNIVERSITY CLOSURES?

No. Graduate Assistants paid monthly are not required to make up time when the University is closed for holidays, or any emergency closure declared by the President. Graduate Assistants should observe holidays the same as Faculty and Staff. Graduate Assistants are paid a monthly stipend, not hour-for-hour work performed. They do not owe for time missed during holidays.

MONTHLY PAYROLL CUTOFF DATE

To ensure all monthly paid employees are paid correctly in December, the paperwork for any updates/changes must be submitted to University Human Resources by 5pm on Monday, December 4th.

PREPARING FOR W-2s

Consent to get your W-2 electronically:

- Use this [Link](#) to access SOARHR.
- Navigate to Self Service>USM HR/Payroll Self Service>W-2/W-2c Consent Link.

If you previously consented to receive the W-2 form electronically, you **do not** have to consent again this year. If you do not consent, you will have to wait for your W-2 to arrive in the mail. If you have questions, please refer them via e-mail to Payroll@usm.edu.

Now is a good time to make sure that your proper mailing address is in SOAR so that your W-2 is mailed to the right place. [Change of Address Forms](#) are located on the University Human Resources Website.

SUMMER 2024 GRADUATE ASSISTANT PAPERWORK

Full Summer Semester – PAF effective dates May 17, 2024 - August 13, 2024

PAF due to the Graduate School Monday, April 8, 2024.

2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR GRADUATE ASSISTANT PAPERWORK

Full Academic Year – PAF Effective dates August 14, 2024 - May 13, 2025

PAF due to the Graduate School Friday, June 21st, 2024

SPLIT FUNDING AND DEPARTMENT ID

When a PAF is submitted for an employee that is split funded, the budget string with the largest percentage is entered into SOARHR as the Department ID. If two funding sources are evenly split 50/50, the first budget string entered on the PAF becomes the employee's home Department ID. Please keep this information in mind as you process PAFs with split funding.

FORM 1095-C ELECTRONIC CONSENT

Sign up to receive your 1095-C form (a form used for tax filings regarding your benefits) electronically is available.

- Access SoarHR <https://soarhr.usm.edu/>
- Navigate to Self Service > Benefits > 1095-C consent
- Check the consent box and hit submit
- You will then be prompted to enter password verification
- The system will display a confirmation of submission that triggers an email of the change

REMINDER: NO HIRING IN DECEMBER

University Human Resources would like to remind you there is no hiring during the month of December. This includes all student, part-time, and benefit-eligible positions. Any paperwork received after November 27th will require a start date of January 3, 2023, or later with approved background check clearance and completed paperwork.

*Note: No hiring means that start dates cannot be in December. You may, however, continue posting jobs, conducting interviews, making offers, and starting new hire paperwork.

NEW RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON THE HR WEBSITE

University HR would like to direct you to new resources available on our updated website.

Wellness & Safety

- + Discrimination / Harassment Concerns
- + Employee Assistance Program
- + Grievance Procedure
- + Lactation/Breastfeeding
- + Leave of Absence
- + Mediation
- + Report a Concern
- + Social Connections
- + Staff Council
- + Title IX
- + Worker's Compensation
- + Workplace Accommodations

[Wellness & Safety](#)

A new “Wellness & Safety” page has been added to the HR website listing resources available to assist with concerns you may have, which includes discrimination concerns, EAP, grievance procedures, leave of absence, lactation rooms, etc. (see full list to the left). We hope this provides an easier way to identify the resources that are available to you and how to access them.

If you have questions or suggestions for how to improve this page, please feel free to contact Krystyna Varnado, Sr AVP for HR, at krystyna.varnado@usm.edu.

New Hire Onboarding

[Onboarding for New Hires](#)

A new section has been added to the website specifically for new employees, which includes an onboarding page. This page outlines for the new employee what to do and expect before and during their new employment with us. Make sure your new hires are familiar with this page so they can get the information they need to be successful.

[Department Onboarding](#)

We have also added department onboarding under the Managers tab in Performance Management Tools. Here a department can find an onboarding checklist to make sure they are addressing the needs of their new hire to ensure the most successful experience possible.



SKILLS-BASED HIRING

The Staff Hiring Toolkit promotes what is known as skills-based hiring, which is a contemporary recruitment approach centering on evaluating candidates based on their skills rather than traditional metrics like education or past work experience. While employers have long relied on education or years of experience in a given role to signal a candidate's capability of performing a job, these requirements unintentionally weed out perfectly qualified candidates for seemingly arbitrary reasons. Skills-based hiring has gained traction due to its ability to uncover qualified candidates based on their abilities and potential to excel in a role. This is not to say that education and experience don't matter at all- there will always be some level of minimum qualifications needed- but that the idea of what qualifies an applicant should be reconsidered.

Using the processes outlined in the Staff Hiring Toolkit accomplishes the following objectives:

Ensures legal compliance

Employment decisions must abide by laws and regulations. Hiring managers and committee members must understand the limitations of what we ask about and evaluate in our decision making. Skills-based hiring provides a structured and fair approach to hiring focused on job-related criteria to minimize the risk of discrimination based on non-essential qualifications.

Expands the talent pool

Skills-based hiring can help identify candidates who may not have formal education or traditional career paths but have the right mix of skills and competencies for the position. Removing unnecessary job requirements- like years of experience performing specific roles or a skill that can easily be learned- may expand your talent pool immensely. This can have a significant societal impact, as well, as it removes barriers for more people to access better paid benefitted jobs.

Increases quality of hires

Requirements such as degrees and years of experience aren't always as reliable as skills and competencies for how a candidate is likely to perform. Research shows employers who use skills-based hiring are 60% more likely to make a successful hire than those who don't. When employee competencies are aligned with the role, the employee is more likely to be engaged and motivated at work, which leads to higher performance, productivity, and institutional success.

Reduces bias and increases talent pipeline diversity

Traditional requirements often exclude individuals from diverse backgrounds and inadvertently perpetuate biases. Skills-based hiring disrupts this pattern by prioritizing objective skill assessment, thus minimizing unconscious bias, and fostering a more diverse talent pipeline that brings fresh perspectives and innovation.

Improves employee retention

When people's skills are well-matched with their role, it enhances their sense of belonging and reduces turnover. You can boost retention further by connecting skills-based hiring with our performance management program. Linking skills-based hiring with performance plans facilitates career progression and increases retention rates significantly. Organizations that excel at internal mobility retain employees on average 2x longer than organizations that don't.

For more information on skills-based hiring and why USM promotes this approach, review articles from [Forbes](#), [SHRM](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

NEW HIRING PROCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF POSTINGS

Per our 2023 Affirmative Action Plan Good Faith Efforts, the following changes to the hiring process were effective **November 1, 2023**:

- 1) Training on the hiring process for staff is required for all hiring managers.
 - Anyone with supervisory responsibility has been assigned the course “Staff Hiring Process” in Canvas, which must be completed prior to posting a position in Cornerstone. University HR cannot post a position until they are able to confirm in Canvas that the hiring manager has completed the training.
 - Hiring managers are responsible for ensuring that all participants in the hiring process utilize the staff hiring toolkit and watch the “Staff Hiring Process” training available on the HR website (though only the training for the hiring manager will be tracked in Canvas and required prior to the posting).
 - Training requirements for faculty searches have been communicated through the Provost and are already in place.
- 2) All search documentation must be returned to University HR at the end of the search process.
 - At the close of a search- whether an offer is accepted or the search is cancelled- all official documentation from the search must be submitted to University Human Resources, who will become the official keeper of the records.
 - Official documentation is defined in the “Staff Hiring Process” training and the Staff Hiring Toolkit (see also “Staff Hiring Process At-A-Glance”).
 - Documentation for faculty searches should also be submitted to University Human Resources at the close of the search.

If you have questions about these requirements, please contact Kourtney Stookey, HR Generalist, or Miranda Brumfield, HR Partner, for further assistance.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

A reminder that all benefit-eligible employees have access to our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). To register online, go to [GuidanceResources.com](https://www.guidanceresources.com) or the app GuidanceNow, and use the Organization Web ID COM589. When it asks for your company name, enter UNIVE (a box should pop up with USM for you to select). In addition to web resources, membership also comes with telephonic access to talk to a counselor, financial advisor, or legal advisor: 800-272-7255.

Click [here](#) to view a short video about the EAP.

This month’s features include:

- [Handling Holiday Stress](#)
- [Holiday Resource Guide](#)
- [Video - Resilience in Stressful Times](#)
- [Coping with a Traumatic Event](#)
- [Making Your New Year’s Resolutions Count](#)
- [Eat Right Toolkit](#)
- [Emotional Eating](#)
- [Mindfulness and Relaxation Toolkit](#)
- [How Your EAP Can Help: Preventing Burnout](#)
- [How Your EAP Can Help: Easing Anxiety](#)
- [Video - What To Expect When Reaching Out](#)

If you have questions about any of the information contained in this HR Update, please contact our main line at 6-4050 or your HR Partner for more information. SMTTT!